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INTRODUCTION.

THE author of this little eſſay ſcarcely knows what apology to make for preſuming to appear before the publick in a ſcience which has afforded employment for the pens of ſo many learned men, and able naturaliſts.

What he has here attempted is to bring together and illuſtrate the Britiſh proper Ferns; no attempt of the kind having ever before appeared in our own, or any other language. The greateſt part of them have indeed been figured and deſcribed, but many of thoſe figures are too inaccurate to give a clear and diſtinct idea of the plant, and being ſcattered through the volumes of many authors, will ſubject to a very great expence, thoſe who are deſirous to inform themſelves of a tribe of plants ſo ſingular and beautiful as the Britiſh proper Ferns muſt be allowed to be.

It is the intention of the author in this undertaking to give a clear and diſtinct idea of every ſpecies in its various ſtages of growth, and under the various accidents it is liable to, as far as is neceſſary for enabling the ſtudent to diſcriminate each with eaſe and certainty; to exhibit them at one view, and at a ſmall expence. And if it appears that he has acquitted himſelf well in theſe particulars, he wiſhes not for a more eligible plea.

Many

JAMES BOLTON *Filices Britannicae (An History of the British Proper Ferns)* LEEDS, 1785–1790 CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN Octavo